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THE LAND OF THE LOTUS EATERS

*MEANWHILE the God, whose hand the thunder forms,
Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with storms,*

*Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
And Night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.*

*Now here, now there the giddy ships are borne,
And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn.*

*We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.*

*Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
Oerwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.*

*But the third morning when Aurora brings,
We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings;*

*Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclin'd,
We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.*

*Then to my native country had I sail'd:
But the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd.*

*Strong was the tide, which by the northern blast
Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.*

*Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore
Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore:*

*The tenth we touch'd by various errors tost,
The Land of Lotus and the flow'ry coast.*

*We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.*

*Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
(An herald one) the dubious coast to view,*

*And learn what habitants possess the place.
They went, and found a hospitable race;
Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign quest,
They eat, they drink, and nature gives them feast;
The trees around them, all their fruits produce;
Lotus, the name; divine, Nectarious juice!
(Thence call'd Lotophagi) which whoso tastes,
Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,
No other home nor other care intends,
But quits his home, his country and his friends:
The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground
We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound:
The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
Or, the charm tasted had returned no more.
Now plac'd in order on their banks, they sweep
The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep;
With heavy hearts we labour thro' the tide.
To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.*

—FROM POPE'S TRANSLATION OF HOMER'S «ODYSSEY.»